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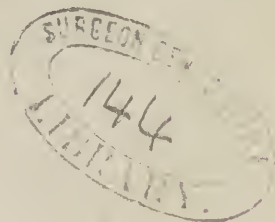
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1850

AN ADDRESS,
DELIVERED ON THE
—
FIRST PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF THE EDIFICE
OF THE
NEW-YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE,
AND THE
INAUGURATION OF ITS FACULTY,

OCTOBER 16, 1850,

BY
ABM. L. COX, M. D.,
...
PROFESSOR OF SURGERY.



NEW-YORK:
J. F. TROW, PRINTER, 49, 51 & 43 ANN-ST.

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NEW-YORK, Oct. 17th, 1850.

DEAR SIR :

We, the undersigned, a committee appointed at a meeting of the Students of the New-York Medical College, at the close of your Lecture, to solieit you, at your earliest convenience, to furnish a copy for publication of your eloquent Oration at the opening of the building and the inauguration of the Professors, earnestly request your compliance with our wishes,

And are truly yours,

CHARLES A. SHEPHERD, of New-York.

A. H. SNEED, of Georgia.

J. M. DUCOUDRAY, of France.

R. J. D. IRWIN, of New-York.

HENRY D. APPLETON, of Maryland.

CORNELIUS W. McLAUGHLIN, of New-York.

GURDON H. WILCOX, of New-York.

JAMES W. PURDY, of New-York.

J. EDWARDS LEAVITT, of New-York.

J. G. DENSLOW, of New-York.

A. L. COX, M.D.,

Professor of Surgery, N. Y. M. C.

NEW-YORK, Oct. 18th, 1850.

GENTLEMEN :

I cheerfully comply with your request, to present you for publication, a copy of my Address on the occasion of the first public exhibition of the Building, and the inauguration of the Faculty of the New-York Medical College.

But I beg to say, that I yield to your request, rather with a desire to gratify your wishes and those of other friends, than with any confidence in the claims of my Address to so high an honor as your favor designs for it.

Very respectfully, Gentlemen,

Your friend,

ABM. L. COX.

TO MESSRS. CHARLES A. SHEPHERD,

A. H. SNEED, and others,

Com. of the Students of the N. Y. M. C.

A D D R E S S .

THE occasion of opening to the public view a new Fabric, reared for the purpose of promoting the instruction of gentlemen, destined to the high duties of preserving the public health and healing the sick, is of itself one of essential interest to our fellow-citizens ; while to those on whom have devolved the cares and responsibilities of its inception and progress, it is one of intense and absorbing anxiety. In their name, however, we may be permitted to say that their hopes of usefulness and final success altogether outweigh every feeling of apprehension, and that they indulge not without reason in anticipations the most sanguine, of signaling their enterprise as the harbinger of great improvements in their favorite pursuit of teaching the sciences connected with the healing art. They believe it will not be in vain that their hands have reared a new temple of science. They have dedicated it to truth. They have written on its walls as their motto, Onward ! They shut no door to inquiry. They hail with sincere welcome every improvement. They will advance their cause by devotion and zeal in the cultivation of science, but will not use their influence to crush men who promise superior attainments, or develope original powers. The ardent student of nature,

the profound investigator of her hidden mysteries, the discoverer of new resources in the art of healing, the inventor of valuable processes by which human sorrows and sicknesses may be assuaged, will, in these halls, find his eulogist; and here his persecutor will find no friends.

It is painful to recall how often the labors of the greatest benefactors of mankind have been rewarded by the persecutions of the envious, the bitter hostility of those malignant natures who can endure no rivalry, while they are incapable themselves of supplying any thing original, valuable, or new to the general stock of professional knowledge. Always ready to depress the claims and overpower the energies of real merit, these men seldom leave behind them any thing like improvement to mark their pathway through life; their names perish, and their memories live only in the histories of the men whom, for their worth, they have persecuted, and to whom they are indebted for any notice whatever by posterity. They become embalmed like insects in the amber, which during their lifetime they defiled. They are held up as beacons to the young, and they are useful but not honorable in being employed to deter others from their unworthy practices. Such were the men by whom the immortal Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, was persecuted and defamed. When they could no longer resist the power of his illustrations and proofs, they then denied the discovery itself. It was an old thing—well known to the ancients—merely revived by a lucky plagiarist. Harvey was at last a suicide. But posterity has well avenged his honor. The world-wide fame of his brilliant discovery, and the universal appellation of “the immortal Harvey,” as well as the general execration with which his persecutors are regarded, should admonish petty tyrants every where of the sure fate with which the justice of mankind will brand their baseness.

Institutions of learning known for soundness of doctrine.

and yet marked by a spirit of true liberality towards worth and genius, furnish at once a safeguard and ornament to science.

Such, fellow-citizens, it is designed to make the New-York Medical College. They will delight to aid those who are marked by the shafts of envy. They will be ever firm and foremost to place a defence against the illiberal and the unjust, in favor of true merit. It will be their steadfast aim to teach truth, to encourage worth, and stimulate genius, to give a fair consideration to every attempt at improvement, and while they will reject the errors of the times however popular, and steadily pursue the course of science, they will yet ever be liberal and charitable to those who attempt improvement ; and even where these attempts are not crowned with success, they will reject without malice, and disdain to employ the power of combined influence which resides in such institutions, to crush the hopes or dash the fortunes of such as they may consider unsuccessful. A steady perseverance in the exercise of these just principles, they are persuaded, will end in the attainment of the confidence both of their profession and the public, and be fraught with benefits to themselves and to their fellow-men.

In its infancy, a college like ours cannot certainly be expected to recount its victories, or tell by what discoveries or improvements it has rendered itself venerable or illustrious. But it is competent for it, nay it is expected of it, to disclose its principles and inform the public what it proposes to accomplish. This reasonable expectation shall be gratified, and it will afford the speaker an opportunity to express his unfeigned regard for his colleagues, and to lay before his audience the distinguished qualifications by which they are expected to sustain the high anticipations of their friends in regard to the usefulness of their course as public teachers of medicine. In performing this grateful duty he will avoid all unjust eulogy, but will take the

liberty to state, with freedom and truth, the real grounds of his sanguine expectations.

To commence with the professorship of the Practice of Medicine. This branch, in the study and practice of which all the knowledge of every other science is requisite, demands of the physician the exercise likewise of every native power and resource of the intellectual faculties. It is not possible to practice medicine as a trade, and at the same time to perform its high duties truly and well. Whoever attempts this, loads his conscience with the accumulated crime of habitual and wanton waste of human life; and though, by his wholesale operations on the credulity as well as the constitutions of his fellow-creatures, he may amass wealth, may dwell in a palace, and roll in splendor through the streets in a golden chariot, conscience will keep him unquiet, the general consent of the best and most enlightened will brand him with quackery, and he will find that, notwithstanding the riches he may accumulate, he will not be able to bequeath to his posterity, with them, that richer wealth, of a good name. In vain he attempts to allay the pangs of an evil conscience by the assurance that his medicine is innocent. He knows too well that innocent and useful as it may be in the hands of a skilful prescriber, its mere excellence cannot of itself prevent his guilt in keeping from the sick man the remedy appropriate to his case. If it does no good, says he, it will do no harm. But does it not do harm when it occupies the time, precious as life to the sick? Certainly it does. The inflammation, or the fever, or whatever else the disease may be, is permitted by his innocent medicine to go on unarrested in its progress, and to work out its mission of death with certainty. This is one of the greatest evils of mere routine practice, and if the patient is not actively sacrificed in this instance by the operation of a virulent poison, he is made the victim of a disease curable perhaps in itself, by the sub-

stitution of a nostrum which passively kills in preventing the employment of a proper remedy.

The same censure is applicable to the practice of a physician who cannot investigate the case. He, by his routine, virtually destroys the life of his patient, because he does not cure him, when it is possible to do so by the proper exercise of that sagacity which results from a real knowledge of the nature of the case, and of the vast treasury of resources ever at hand to a well educated and skilful physician and surgeon.

In the education of the disciple of our art then, it is absolutely essential that he should be taught not only the necessary sciences, but also that his mind should be familiarized with those processes of thought, with those habits of reasoning and inquiry, of investigation and of combination, by which he becomes a philosopher. Short of this, no man is either a real physician or surgeon. The practice of the art of healing then, calls for and employs the largest possible amount of general and scientific attainment, and the exercise of the most comprehensive intellectual resource of any employment whatever. The physician must be a man of some literary facilities, he must read, he must think, yes, he must delight in the ready and constant employment of the intellectual faculties. He must be able instantly to apply himself to a given problem of disease, however obscure, with an energy not to be vanquished. Like the general on the battle-field, he must be instant in his perception of the movements of his enemy, full of resource to counteract any development of his progress, his judgment must be correct, his perception quick and accurate, his mind free from prejudice, and capable of intense and successful application to whatever novel condition and circumstance he may be called to encounter. In one moment he must have at his command all the vast store of information which his chemistry and his anatomy supply him. He must be able promptly to com-

bine the knowledge of the healthy organization, the physiology of the system in general, of the particular organ affected, its relation to health, and the changes wrought by disease. Whatever pathology has taught him must be ready at the moment, to supply explanation of symptoms and furnish proofs of his case. Then the medicines on which he is to rely are to be before his mind as things with which he is well acquainted. He must remember their power to injure as well as to serve his patient, and he must so select and combine his remedies, that the evil shall be avoided and the good availed of, with an infallible certainty, and with a promptness which knows no parallel in any other pursuit of men.

Or if his case be one of time, where the habit of disease is to be overcome, he must understand how to administer his remedy for the attainment of this important end, so that caution and patience, and a prudent care to save the health and strength of the invalid, must guide his course, instead of pursuing the rapid and vigorous practice which is required by cases more acute, and which, indeed, demand altogether a different treatment.

In addition to these qualifications, a physician must cultivate the use of his pen, in order to note down his reflections and observations, and to record cases which are either novel or instructive. No pursuit of human life, then, demands a greater scope of intellectual resource, or a greater versatility of mental power, than that of the healing art.

It is impossible to obtain too much preparatory knowledge in order to practise well. It is impossible to be endowed with too much mental power and resource in order to apply that knowledge with success.

With such views of the duties of a physician, we may honestly and not irreverently exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" It requires time and labor to learn the very initiative of medical science. It requires observation

and practice to gain a command of the art of medicine. As with the painter, when he has learned the laws of perspective and been taught the power of light and shade, has acquired a knowledge of colors and the methods of mixing and applying them, it depends afterwards on his native genius whether he can use all this knowledge with advantage: one disciple of the art, with the same instruction as another, will produce a splendid and spirited work, while knowledge, and practice, and perseverance, will not enable the other to soar above the meanest mediocrity: so with the physician, it often happens that men can acquire knowledge but have not the power to apply their knowledge to practice. They are learned but not skilful. They can discourse well and display learning, but want the practical talent. Their minds do not discover the difference of things, and if they kill you by their stupidity, they can give a world of learned authority for their course.

It is, then, of the highest importance that in teaching the practice, the student should early be taught to think and to act well. The sciences essential to make the practitioner should be so taught that he should, *pari passu*, be made to learn their actual application. The teaching should be practical. Illustrations of disease should accompany their description. Lectures should not only embody and display learning, but they should teach through every sense available to instruction. What can be manifested to the eye should never be solely confided to the ear. The student should be accustomed to see for himself. In this way he will be well instructed: his devoted interest will be really secured; his attainments will be actual, and they will be useful to himself and salutary to his patient. Individual cases of disease must be exhibited in connection with their description. Drawings, models, and pathological preparations must accompany all explanations. In one

word, the subject must be made, in its mode of presentation to the student, as much as possible demonstrative.

This is the happy conception of the gentleman who occupies the chair of the Practice in this school. The draftsman has been at work under his direction for a long time, to enrich the resources of his department, and the class who shall attend his course will find that they will be taught no stale truisms nor pedantic dogmas, but that the Practice of Medicine under his teaching will have a life and vigor, an attractiveness and beauty, which will place it alongside of Surgery itself, for interest and perspicuity.

It is hardly necessary to remark, that the incumbent of the chair of the Practice of Medicine in this school has enjoyed an unexampled success in the treatment of diseases of the lungs, and that multitudes have been restored, by his means, to perfect health, whose prospects, independently of his resources, were of the most hopeless kind. The illustrious names of those great masters and professors of our own country, of Mott, Revere, Dixon, and Smith, of this city, of Ware and Warren, of Boston, of Forbes, McNiss, and Watson, of London, and the authority of at least six of the very first journals of Great Britain and Ireland, as well as the distinguished Malgaigne of Paris, have all attested the great value of his suggestions and discoveries, and have, by their high authority and generous eulogy, entirely set at rest any question which the mere novelty of an original practice must be expected to raise.

The opinions of the most eminent trans-Atlantic authorities in his favor, so seldom vouchsafed by those jealous and severe judges, sufficiently guarantee the value of the improvements which have not only established his own fame, both at home and abroad, but have also, among foreigners, added a lustre to the reputation of American science, equally honorable to himself and to the profession of his native land.

Several young practitioners who have within a few years graduated at one or other of the institutions in this city, and who had taken the trouble to acquaint themselves practically with these principles of treatment, have not only gone into rapid and successful practice, but have positively superseded the older physicians of their neighborhoods, who from being unacquainted with this important resource, were entirely unable to compete with them.

The Clinique of Surgery and Medicine attached to this Institution, will be enriched by the personal attention and lectures of this professor, and his immense practice, being at this moment the largest of this city or country, will furnish an abundance of cases illustrative of the principles and treatment adapted to them, and cannot fail to reward the devoted attention of the medical student, whether regarded in the light of gratifying his thirst for knowledge, or of preparing him for the successful practice of his profession.

In the department of Chemistry, no expense or pains has been spared. The chair has been filled by an enthusiastic cultivator of the science. Ample means, zeal, devotion, eloquence, and experience in lecturing, all are his. The mode of teaching his branch practically is destined to be adopted by all other Schools, but we take this occasion to put in for him and for the honor of our infant Institution a claim for its originality. It is this: the graduating class will be divided into subclasses, which will be successively and separately instructed in the practical duties of chemical analysis, the application of tests, and the actual performance of all those manipulations which are essential to render the theoretical instructions of the department familiar and available in after life. The utility of this course will be fully understood by professional men, when called as witnesses in courts of justice to give scientific information to juries. Nothing has impaired more the confidence of the public than the deficiency of physicians in this very par-

ticular. Many gentlemen possessing very respectable acquirements in chemistry have been made to misrepresent themselves, and have lost reputation for not being able at once to explain the exact point, or perform the particular manipulation expected of them on the occasions referred to. This kind of instruction in Chemistry cannot be too highly prized, and will be most thoroughly communicated in the New-York Medical College.

The wonders of the microscope, an instrument destined to extend and promote our inquiries into the secrets of nature, will receive at the hand of the Professor of Chemistry due attention, and will derive no unimportant additional interest from the manner of the lecturer, and the deep enthusiasm which he is so able to communicate to the subjects which engage his attention.

Again : Chemistry of late years has made rapid strides in a direction entirely new and surprising. Its victories over the mineral kingdom, its discoveries in respect to the nature of air, light, electricity, and heat, its miraculous power in the production of a thousand existences novel before to the world, and useful in the arts, as well as in every department of life, are well known ; but at the present moment chemistry is pushing inquiry into the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and with results as captivating and as useful to the physician, as the discoveries of the previous half century have been to the philosopher.

These discoveries will be taught by this chair, and it requires an educated physician rather than a mere chemist to teach them well to medical students. The Professor of this branch, though entirely devoted to the cultivation of this particular science, is every way and eminently qualified to give to the doctrines and facts of Chemistry that exact turn and application, which will fit them to become most impressive and useful to the medical student. Animal Chemistry has opened to the human mind a new field of

knowledge and inquiry, and the medical man will not only be behind the age, but will find himself crippled in his general pursuit of professional knowledge, unless he has received in his primary education a sufficient amount of instruction in respect to it.

The *Materia Medica* is intrusted to a gentleman whose name is already distinguished for his contributions to literature and science. They are recorded in the Institutes of the Smithsonian Foundation at Washington, and have therefore passed an ordeal which admits nothing without merit, value, and originality. That these labors of our honored colleague are thus esteemed, is so well known among literary and scientific circles that it is needless even to assert it.

The thorough instruction of the Professor of this department will furnish every facility for the acquisition of a perfect knowledge of the various articles used in the Practice of Medicine, so that they shall be made familiar to the senses of sight and touch, and he will teach all modern improvements and discoveries.

He will also give instructions in regard to the abuse as well as the use of medicines, and thus forewarn the young practitioner of errors which he should avoid.

The natural history, preparation, and modes of administration of the various drugs, their classification, composition, their physiological and therapeutic effects, together with the laws which govern or modify their action, will all be comprehended in the course of instruction on *Materia Medica* in this School.

For the purpose of making the medical student more familiar with the subject, an extensive cabinet of impure and adulterated, as well as of pure and genuine drugs, will be furnished for his use, and much time and attention will be devoted to the best modes of discriminating between them. Such knowledge is regarded as of vital importance,

since the mass of practitioners through the country are compelled to dispense their own medicines, and should be qualified to judge of their character by their own familiar acquaintance with their sensible and medicinal properties.

In the department of Anatomy and Physiology, the gentleman having charge of it needs no commendation. He has been heretofore known as the most successful and popular private teacher in this city, whether we regard the test of large classes, the devoted attachment of his students, the thoroughness of his instructions, his Herculean power of endurance, the versatility of his attainments and his facility to teach every branch of professional science, or finally, the modesty and the worth of his private character as a man, and the deep earnestness of his devotion to his profession in all its departments.

Yet it may be said that the subject will be taught by him not only in the systematic manner usually adopted, by which each particular structure is insulated and separately described, but also in reference to the relation of parts, as they are actually found in operations and dissections.

This is a method of instruction the originality of which is due to our late distinguished and lamented countryman, Dr. John D. Godman. It was found to be a most attractive and instructive feature in the lectures of that eloquent and admirable teacher, and is to be regarded as a most valuable improvement in rendering anatomical knowledge familiar and available.

In addition to Systematic and Relative Anatomy, the Professor will, from time to time, in the natural relation and place, fully explain every thing desirable to be taught in a college course, which can profitably employ the time of the students in the departments of Physiology and Pathology.

The Professor of Midwifery and the Diseases of Women and Children, brings to the subject confided to him, the combined advantages of personal popularity, great facility

in the didactic art, an easy and fluent eloquence, ripe scholarship, some several years' experience in teaching in another college, and many in practising his profession, with an intimate knowledge of his subject, in all its bearings, as it is taught both at home and abroad.

The course of the Professor of Midwifery will be thorough and complete, embracing the anatomy of the pelvis and organs of generation, their healthy functions, and their diseases. The great advances made in Uterine Pathology render especial attention to this subject necessary. Practical instructions will be given in physical diagnosis, and the use of the speculum, in the physiology of generation and utero-gestation, in the recent important discoveries in embryology, and the signs and diseases of pregnancy. Abortion, its causes and treatment, parturition and its complications, the use of instruments, and the mechanism of labor, will be fully explained. A weekly clinique will also be held, and students will be furnished with cases in midwifery at the houses of patients.

There remains but one more chair, of the incumbent of which it would be indecorous for me to speak, further than to observe that he has practised for many years in this city what he presumes now to teach; and instead, therefore, of going into the particulars of what he intends to do, the speaker will content himself with declaring what he believes incumbent on a professor of surgery, and then leave to others to decide how near to these views the actual performance shall in the end approach.

Surgery should be taught, in the first place, in reference to those great principles which enable the practitioner to anticipate with accuracy, what will be the course of events derived from the operations of nature unassisted, in any given circumstances of accident or disease: what principles are brought to bear in the employment of the means of cure: the manner in which these measures of treat-

ment produce their results, and the nature and laws of each particular case of disease, accident, or injury, in the practice of surgery. It is necessary to familiarize the student's mind with these points of information, because as great principles they are fraught with instruction, from which rules, at once natural and useful, are spontaneously educed for almost any case of emergency or danger. Instead of a knowledge of principles, many persons expect to excel by mere acquaintance with the dogmatic directions of others. This, however, is not possible; the nature of the cause is necessary to be known, since otherwise the surgeon would be incapable of modifying and adapting rules to the ever varying circumstances and occurrences of disease. A good surgeon is a medical philosopher, but without a knowledge of principles he would degenerate into a mere barber. As a profound knowledge of surgery is a matter of inestimable benefit to the practice of medicine, so a true and thorough acquaintance with the whole art of medicine is an essential prerequisite to a skilful practice of surgery. To teach well the principles of inflammation, a process of the system which universally prevails on the occasion of every severe injury or accident, is positively necessary, therefore, to communicate a knowledge of its treatment: and the surgeon who operates, or attempts to address his attention to an important injury without this knowledge, would be about as wise and skilful as an ignorant nurse or an inexperienced mother.

Accurate knowledge of anatomy, also, is necessary to operate well; not the mere acquaintance with the skeleton, nor with the muscles, nor with the arteries, but with all these organizations as they occur in their relations to each other. Surgical anatomy forms an important part of the course of surgical instruction. After this, in natural order, come the operations of surgery. These must be exhibited on the subject in the light of a thorough acquaintance with the

relation of parts, and then the study of operative surgery is made easy and natural.

The history of each accident, the mode of applying splints and bandages, and the use of instruments, should all be discussed and exhibited, and the student taught to avoid the frequent error, of young gentlemen, that the whole of the art depends on the dexterous use of the knife. This is a most contracted and puerile view of the subject, and one, still, which is but too frequently adopted by many who, therefore, lose character by their ignorance in treating cases, which they regard as less brilliant, but which are much more common, and the knowledge of which is of great value to the practitioner and of great use to the patient. If a surgeon prove himself ignorant of the treatment of a paronychia or felon, is it probable that those who have witnessed his failure therein, would be induced to trust him with a case of lithotomy, or of an important fracture, or amputation?

In a city like this great metropolis, it may be thought arrogance for the speaker to attempt the field where a Mott has so long gathered the laurels of surgical renown. But there was a day when even he began his career, and it is not, certainly, wrong to emulate the highest excellence, nor is there any thing in this art which is in itself unattainable.

The members of the class of this school, will be favored with the sight of several capital operations in the clinique of this institution which will be opened at twelve o'clock to-morrow. A case of lithotomy, one of cataract, a striking case of double compound hare-lip, several interesting and important cases of tumors, besides the usual varieties of slighter character, are promised, and will be presented to them at the earliest opportunity; and the friendly interest of many practitioners is already secured, to furnish from their large fields of practice a great and

interesting variety, for the subsequent clinics in this institution.

In addition to these resources, which comprise whatever is at the present time the usual means of instruction in the schools of this country, it is the fixed purpose of the institution to connect with it a fine hospital, by which students will be more thoroughly instructed in practical medicine and surgery than has ever yet been attempted among us. This is the real point of Reform, to use the cant word of the time, which medical instruction requires. Students need to be practically acquainted with their profession. All the knowledge of science is of little avail, unless this last means of instruction is superadded; and, it is a well-known fact, that the men among us who have become skilful surgeons and physicians, are self-made; and, that those who have not the character and native force of intellect to instruct themselves, never become skilful in their profession or eminent in practice at all. If a more practical mode of teaching prevailed, more students would acquire the requisite skill. To this fact, namely, the deficiency of practical teaching, must in a great degree be attributed the success of quackery and imposture, and the fashion which prevails in society of giving preference to those who affect absurd and ridiculous systems, and forswear all allegiance to sound philosophy and palpable truth.

The profession itself, then, must be aroused. By asserting their claims to public confidence in a proper manner, the end of giving a correct tone to the public mind will be easily attained. No mere crying down of the different forms of quackery will at all avail. The public do not put proper confidence in the profession at large, in consequence, to a great extent, of their own follies and faults. Medical men injure themselves when they speak ill of each other. Instead of degrading the character of

their brethren as individuals, they virtually degrade their profession and themselves. The result is that charlatanry triumphs, and the care of human health and life passes into the hands of men, who receive the confidence of the public merely because their pretensions are new, and, they hope, sound, but whose very claims condemn them when they are understood, since they are founded in falsehood, folly, and impudent imposture.

With all the defects of medical teaching, however, the regular physician throughout our country, is much superior in his claims to the estimate he receives from his fellow citizens. It has been the lot of the speaker to become acquainted with many professional gentlemen through the country, and it is with equal satisfaction, and deep conviction of its truth, he declares his opinion, that, in the usual diseases, where they have a chance of seeing a sufficient variety of cases, the country physicians become skilful and useful men. It is impossible that they should be particularly *au fait* in the unusual occurrences of disease, where only a sparse population furnishes them the means of their observation. But, it is absolutely certain, that where they are accustomed to observe symptoms, and practise their art, their previous knowledge soon gives them skill and success; and, on the whole, they constitute a body of great worth and usefulness, and are much more deserving public favor and confidence than they are in the habit of receiving it.

A sensible man, educated in any of our colleges, soon acquires by experience and observation in actual practice, such skill in the class of diseases to which he is accustomed, as makes him a most useful and respectable practitioner. But it is a great evil that he should have to learn on his patients. It is possible, therefore, to prepare students better for the arduous duties of their medical career than is now done; and nothing can do this more com-

pletely, than for the benevolent and enterprising of our citizens to lend their aid in establishing hospitals in immediate connection with colleges, by means of which the student can be made actually familiar with all sorts of diseases, and accustomed to observe cases daily, until experience in practice renders him familiar with the task of applying his knowledge to the treatment of disease. Such a course of teaching would send forth the student to his future duties, a real physician and surgeon. This attainment should be acquired before he is ushered into the cares and responsibilities of his profession; and to accomplish this important end, is the aim this institution will keep in view until it is effected.

It is as vain to teach subjects as practical in their nature as surgery and medicine by mere descriptions, whether by reading or hearing, as it would be to make a soldier by the study of the tactics of war under an eminent master, without his using the drill, or being habituated to actual service; or a sailor, by putting him through a course of academic instruction in navigation, without ever letting him so much as go on board a ship or make a voyage by sea.

These remarks are not intended to degrade scientific teaching in the art of healing, but are made with a view to enforce the necessity of superadding essential instructions in the actual duties by which those sciences are reduced to practice.

No enterprise of benevolence or philanthropy, none of science or patriotism, can be named, which is more calculated to benefit the whole population of our land, than this of producing a hospital in immediate connection with a medical school. Its benefits to the sick poor cannot be doubted; the advantages to the student of medicine are equally obvious; but if we attempt to calculate the blessings to each family throughout the country, to estimate the extent of benefit to be derived to our whole population by the

thorough instruction given to their physicians, we are not able to grasp the result. It is a benefaction, of which the consequences penetrate all the walks of life. To save the health of parents, is to prevent the pauperism and wretchedness of families; to cure the diseases of children is to diffuse joy through a circle of relatives, and to save to the community its real jewels, and to preserve its truest wealth. We will persevere, then, in the grand object of establishing a college hospital, and, with God's help, will finally accomplish a project, whose beneficial influences must extend themselves to other schools throughout our country, until it shall be said of the United States, that their medical character is what it should be—the first of all the nations. This we owe to our country. This we will accomplish for our profession, for our fellow-men, for science, and for our own character.

Having said so much in reference to our principles and purposes, it is next proper to allude to the history of the enterprise. It originated in the counsels of two members of our Faculty, and for a year past has engaged their constant thought. At the commencement of the last session of the Legislature of this State, a bill to grant a charter was presented to the Assembly by the Hon. Joseph B. Varnum, Jr., of this city, and was supported by that gentleman until it received the unanimous approbation of the honorable body of which he was a member. The Senate likewise honored the enterprise with the votes of all its members, and the Governor's signature enabled its friends to rejoice in the unanimous support of the whole Legislature of this great State. The New-York Medical College owe to the Hon. James W. Beekman, Senator from this city, their thanks for his efficient aid. This honorable gentleman is distinguished for his zeal in the cause of education in general, and the Institution which his influence has so signally favored at its inception, take plea-

sure in thus expressing their sense of his efficient services, and their gratitude for his frankness, promptness, and fidelity in their interests. The whole delegation from New-York city deserve, with him, high praise for their conduct and their interest, and possess the unfeigned thanks of the Trustees and Faculty of this College. Dr. Richards, of Troy, proved himself likewise a friend of great value in the attainment of the charter, and has also their hearty thanks.

It was too much to expect that a measure of this kind should pass without opposition, and it encountered a vigorous hostility from certain quarters, but the friends of the measure had only to use the means of defence which truth supplied, and the gratifying result is evidence of the essential feebleness of the opposition which was brought against them. To all the members of the last Legislature this Institution owes a debt of gratitude and deep respect. Their conduct in reference to its charter was characterized by great frankness, and the most honorable public spirit. No means were attempted by the friends of the College to operate upon them but argument and explanation, and though they were at first hostile to the project, they became universally convinced of its usefulness, and we trust that its success and efficiency hereafter will establish the propriety of their decision.

The charter was granted on the 8th day of last April. In the month of May the property was purchased for this building, which was then occupied by the old reservoir. As soon as the title could be ascertained to perfect satisfaction, it was put into the hands of Messrs. A. & J. White, masons, and Mr. Zeil J. Eggleston, carpenter, under the direction of Messrs. Field & Correja, architects, with the general plan of the halls and ante-rooms, by its original founders. This was decided only after a careful inspection of the most approved structures of the kind in the country. The first stone of this house was laid

on the last day of July, and now, on the 16th of October, it is finished, just eleven weeks after the laying of the first stone. It is founded, in its whole extent, on a solid rock, fit augury, let us hope, of its character and stability. No improvement or convenience which has been elsewhere introduced, and no suggestion of importance which could be derived from the most experienced teachers, were unheeded, and the design of its projectors has been constantly to construct the very best possible edifice which could be built for the purposes in view. The opinions of gentlemen educated in the first schools abroad, coincide with those of its friends at home, that in every respect their objects have been successfully carried out, and that they have achieved the result of having the best building for the purpose ever yet constructed.

The anatomical rooms are unrivalled in elegance and spaciousness, are replete with every imaginable convenience and facility, and are lighted with twenty sky-lights. The theatre is forty feet from the floor to the top of the dome, and this pierces the superior story by a square of twenty feet in width, which is surmounted with an immense sky-light, and gives a beauty and loftiness to the room that places it above all competition. No column is permitted to mar the perfection of its architecture, and the ceiling is sustained by trussel-work, suspended from the rafters above. The light all comes from the dome, and descends in a perfect flood upon the table below.

The general lecture-room, in which we are now convened, is eighteen feet in height, and is arranged so that every seat is in perfect view of the speaker.

A similar arrangement is found in the Chemical lecture-room below, which possesses a laboratory of the most approved and beautiful structure.

The rooms for practical Chemistry are at once spacious and convenient, well lighted and supplied.

All the seats in the different lecture-rooms and the theatre are made to rise one above another, not in a plane, but in a parabolic curve, which is demonstrably the very best arrangement for sight and convenience. This plan is the suggestion of Dr. Paul Beck Goddard, an eminent professor of Philadelphia, and its first adoption has been in this edifice.

The advantages of Croton water and gas are extended throughout the whole building, and speaking tubes descend from every room to the janitor's apartments.

The charter of the Institution is most liberal, and gives to the graduates every advantage of membership of the different county medical societies, so that they are not obliged to undergo examinations before they can practise in any part of this State.

It is prescribed by its 8th section, that five students from the Free Academy, who shall have the written certificate of the Professors of that Institution of their having attained superior scholarship, will be admitted without charge, to the lectures of this college.

This provision secures the profession against the gratuitous admission of unqualified men, and furnishes a powerful stimulus to meritorious and talented youth educated under the auspices of one of the noblest institutions of literature in this or any other country.

The whole expense of this arrangement falls on the Faculty of the College, and we believe it to be one of unmixed usefulness, in whatever light it may be regarded. The young men who are benefited by its provisions win it as a premium of their scholarship. The profession admits by it no unworthy member, and there is nothing in the provision to break the spirit of an ingenuous and manly youth.

It was one of the charges against Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, that he made the vilest of the people to be their priests. It were a crime almost as great to make

this class their physicians. But we grant, in this system of scholarships, an unobjectionable benefit only to an unobjectionable class of candidates, and it is doubtful whether society at large, or the young gentlemen who may derive the advantages of this provision, will be the most benefited.

It has been a subject of complaint that the degree of Doctor of Medicine has been too freely granted, and that some of its recipients have not deserved its honors. To prevent this degradation from attaching to the diploma of this College, and to secure the profession against the admission of unqualified persons, three medical gentlemen, unconnected with the College and eminent for their learning and character, will preside over the examinations of candidates, and at once secure the Faculty against the charge of favoritism, the profession against the admission of improper persons, and the graduates themselves against the suspicion of not being properly qualified.

Young gentlemen may feel sure that they will not be severely or unjustly treated by the curators, but the effect of this wise provision will be to render the efforts of the Professors the more earnest to conduct their previous instruction so that they shall pass their examinations with honor and success.

Fees for examinations are substituted for the usual graduation fees, so that no possible bribery of the judgment can be produced in this way.

On the whole, we may be assured that the wisdom of these guarantees will make the diploma of the New-York Medical College one of the most honorable testimonials of professional qualification with which any young man can enter on the practice of medicine, and cannot fail to conciliate the approbation of the entire profession.

It is a subject of sincere congratulation to the Faculty of this College, that they are under the direction of a Board of Trustees which comprises an amount of learning, integ-

riety, talent, and high public repute, as great as can be found in any institution in any country whatever; and the speaker has the gratification to know that he expresses only the universal sentiment of the professors, when he says that they feel themselves deeply in their debt for the wisdom of their counsels, the disinterestedness of their labors, and the high honor of their countenance and support. They rejoice, too, in the fact that their eminence and high character in this community, adds weight and lends dignity to the Institution in which they themselves have the privilege to hold their respective chairs.

The Faculty of the College, desirous to render the facilities of the Institution accessible as far as possible to their medical brethren, take this occasion to assure the profession of the pleasure they will derive from any and every opportunity to promote their interests collectively and individually. In order to accommodate practitioners who desire to cultivate practical anatomy, a private anatomical room is furnished for their use.

In conclusion, we would assure the intelligent audience who have to-night favored us with their presence, that no efforts which it will be in the power of the Faculty of the New-York Medical College to make, will be spared to render this seat of learning illustrious, and serviceable to the public weal; and, that while what has been already accomplished is sufficient to afford some guarantee of future usefulness, they are all fully determined that the zeal and fidelity of their future labors shall be the means of giving confidence to their fellow-citizens, and of doing an incalculable amount of good to the common interests of humanity and of science.

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